



JULY 2005

Helping Organizations Retain Their Most Valuable Asset

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Planning Ahead for Caregiving

Organization is necessary to properly assist and care for an elderly relative. Every family and situation has different issues, problems, and challenges. Take note of what your family needs to do and make a checklist.

MEDICAL

- What medical conditions does the elder have?
- What is the recommended treatment?
- What kind of caregiving is most appropriate for the medical situation?
- What are the names and phone numbers of your elder's doctor(s)?

FINANCIAL

- What financial means are available to pay for care or for other necessities?
- What outside or governmental help is available to help cover costs?
- Do you need a financial planner to help organize financial matters?
- Will family members have to cover any costs from their own pockets?

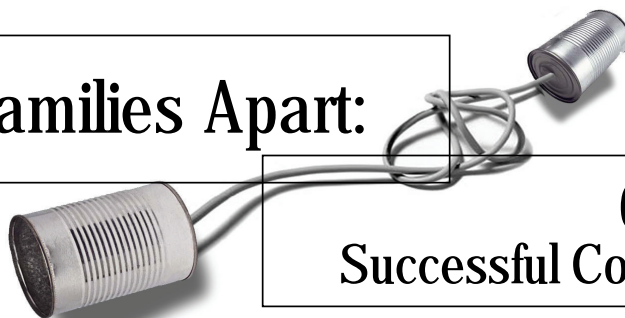
LEGAL

- Are all of the legal documents—wills, powers of attorney, living wills or trusts—in order?
- Do you know where they are located?
- Do you know who your elder's attorney is?

DAILY CARE

- What daily care needs does your elder have—personal care, housekeeping, home health care, or other assistance?
- When is this care most needed?
- Who will be providing this care?

Families Apart:



6 Keys to Successful Co-Parenting

With nearly 50% of all marriages ending in divorce, parenting children from separate households is something that has become more and more common in today's society. As our culture changes, it becomes very important to learn to cope and behave in new and healthy ways. Whether you are raising children under one roof or two, the basic premise of parenting is still the same. Appropriate parenting demands time, consistency, teamwork and putting your child's needs before your own.

Whatever reasons brought you to the end of your relationship, the fact remains that there is a child or children whose relationship with their parents will never end. Not being together as a couple doesn't change the necessity to be together as parents. People used to stay together "for the children." We now know that this is not necessarily the best way to live and raise children. In fact, being consistent parents who have separate lives and work together to parent their children may be preferable and healthier than the old alternative. Here are some things to think about when you are faced with being a family apart:

Make a plan.

Sit down with your ex, put your personal feelings aside and work out a plan for parenting your child(ren) that makes sense for everyone. Try to think of yourselves as "professional parents," not former lovers or divorcees, but professionals who have a moral and ethical obligation to get the job done for their kids.

Have consistent rules.

There is some disagreement around the notion of whether the rules in both households should be exactly the same or just consistent within each separate household. The key is to discuss differences when putting your plan together. Talk about the rules and consequences.

Maybe for some things it doesn't matter if the rule at mom's is slightly different than the rule at dad's. For example, say mom thinks it's OK for your child to play with his friends before they clean up their room, as long as it gets cleaned

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before bedtime. However, dad thinks room first, everything else, after. So what? As long as your child knows the rules in the different households, and they are consistent, so be it. There might be some rules which the two of you agree cannot be different, great! Do yourself a favor, put it all in writing.

Work together.

You may not always like the people you work with, but you may still have to work side by side with them. When you signed up to have children, you signed on to a life long commitment. Unlike marriage, you can't divorce your kids.

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Have a consistent routine.

This is most important if the children are young. As they get older it may be possible to vary their routine more frequently without disruption. Early on, phone calls, visitation or living arrangements need to be consistent. It will take time for everyone to adjust. If small changes happen in the pattern, OK, things come up. Try not to make it a habit (especially at first).

Be flexible.

Things change, people change, children grow. What was appropriate yesterday may not be today. One of the most important jobs of being a parent is to identify and change with the developmental stages your children will go through. When a child is a baby, they need you to take care of all of their needs; when a child becomes an adolescent or teenager, they need you to learn to let go and give them more autonomy.

Step-parents and step-siblings.

If there are new significant others or children, there may be a few more wrinkles to work out. Discuss with your ex and your current spouse what their roles will be. How much authority will they have with your children. This is an area that cannot go un-discussed. Children sometimes resent or act out defiantly against a new parental figure. This is normal behavior. Talk about it.

HMS is here to help

If you are troubled by a particularly difficult relationship, family or parenting issue, call Human Management Services (HMS) for confidential counseling, referrals or information. Remember, HMS is always available to help you and your dependents with any personal, family or work-related concern or difficulty. Why not call an HMS counselor today? We're here to help.

HMS SERVICES

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What is Posttraumatic Stress Disorder?

Mike is a 48-year-old truck driver who travels from Cleveland to Chicago three times per week. On his way back home late one night, he was rounding a bend on the dark highway when he noticed a figure standing by the roadside up ahead in the distance. As he neared the figure standing by the roadside, he noticed it was a woman walking slowly, staring down at her feet. Just as he was about to pass by, the woman suddenly turned and leaped into the path of Mike's truck. He had no time to react, and slammed on his brakes at the same moment he felt the impact of her body against the front of his rig.

The rest of the evening passed in a haze. The state police ruled that the woman likely committed suicide and after taking down the necessary information, allowed Mike to leave the scene with a supervisor at his trucking firm. Mike was driven home by his supervisor who tried to reassure Mike that the accident wasn't his fault.

The next day, the cause of death was ruled a suicide and Mike was cleared of any wrongdoing. He went about the next few days almost as if nothing had happened. He returned to his normal routine, generally performing as well as he'd always had. Despite this seemingly normal exterior, Mike's wife began to notice slight changes in his behavior. At night, he thrashed about in fitful sleep, grinding his teeth and mumbling to himself. He also seemed tense and irritable during the day, which was totally uncharacteristic of Mike. Then the nightmares started. Mike was haunted by night terrors. He started drinking more than usual, losing his temper and withdrawing from friends and family. Even though the accident wasn't his fault, he felt intense guilt. Mike fell into a deep depression and eventually took a leave of absence from work.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

After experiencing an especially traumatic or distressing event, individuals are said to be suffering from post-traumatic stress when they become so preoccupied with the traumatic experience it interferes with normal activities. "Shell-shock" as it has been called, refers to symptoms like flashbacks, nightmares and general emotional numbness following a traumatic experience or event.

Symptoms most often reported by post-traumatic stress victims are a "replay" of the terrifying event and re-experience of the same

feelings associated with the event. The victim has no control over when, where, how long or how frequent these re-occurrences happen. Often there's a preoccupation with the event, which includes self criticism over one's actions during the traumatic experience. "If I had only left earlier..., I should have did 'this' instead..., " as if the experience could have been averted or lessened in severity had the individual responded differently. Commonly, there is a sense of victimization, a feeling of powerlessness and lack of control over their lives.

True post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms appear after the event and not during the traumatic episode itself. Commonly, this disorder succeeds such disturbing experiences as rape or other sexual abuse, physical attack, combat exposure, a serious car accident or childhood physical abuse. People experiencing post-traumatic stress may experience difficulty concentrating, sleeping comfortably or moving forward with their lives. They may withdraw from friends and family, suffer headaches, avoid situations or events that remind them of the experience and easily become agitated and/or depressed. Alcoholism or other substance abuse/addictions are common.

What To Do

The most important thing to know if you, a friend or loved one has symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder is to understand that it can be treated. Learning more about the illness is the first step. Seeking a complete evaluation with a licensed psychiatrist or psychologist to obtain accurate and effective treatment is the next step. The focus of treatment revolves around techniques which help the victim cope with their symptoms. Coming to terms with the event and the victim's survival is at the core of rehabilitation.

HMS is here to help

If you or a family member needs help with post-traumatic stress, contact Human Management Services (HMS) for CONFIDENTIAL counseling, referrals or information. Remember, HMS is always available to help you or your dependents with any type of personal, family or work-related concern. Why not call an EAP counselor today? We're here to help.

